

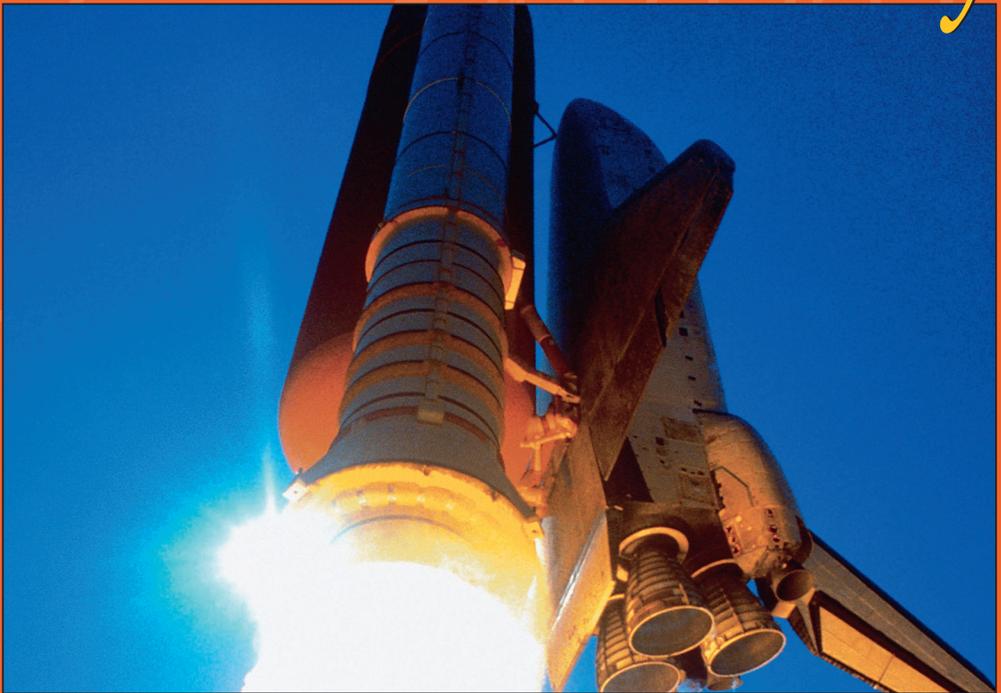
CURRENTS IN



AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP

S E R I E S

TWENTIETH-CENTURY
United States History



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Andrew Huebner
BROWN UNIVERSITY

“...there is every reason to expect that scholarly and popular interest in twentieth-century United States history will continue at a high level, and...historians now in training will add creatively to the shelves of scholarly works...”



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INTRODUCTION

THE CURRENTS IN AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP SERIES offers Americanists abroad updates on the status of theory and practice in disciplines relevant to the study of the society, culture and institutions of the United States of America. Prominent scholars from across the U.S. graciously accepted the invitation of the Study of the U.S. Branch to author annotated bibliographies. We hope the series proves to be valuable in introducing or refreshing courses on the United States, or expanding library collections.

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THE AUTHORS

James T. Patterson is the Ford Foundation Professor of History, Emeritus at Brown University where he has taught since 1972. A graduate of Harvard University, Professor Patterson has also taught at Indiana University and received overseas fellowships from the University of Oxford, Cambridge University and the University of Amsterdam. 🏛️ Dr. Patterson's most recent book is *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (Oxford, 2001) which, along with his 1996 *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (Oxford) was chosen as a History Book Club selection. *Grand Expectations* also won the Bancroft Prize in History in 1997. His *America in the Twentieth Century: A History* (Harcourt Brace, 5th rev. ed. 2000) is a widely used textbook, currently in its fifth edition. Another classic work written by Patterson is *America's Struggle Against Poverty in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard, 2000). 🏛️ Professor Patterson was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1997 and the Society of American Historians in 1974. The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities have all awarded fellowships to Dr. Patterson.

Brown University doctoral students in history Andrew Huebner and Robert Flegler assisted Dr. Patterson in preparing this essay and bibliography. Mr. Huebner's dissertation examines the changing images of soldiers and veterans in American culture between 1941 and 1980 and Mr. Flegler is writing his thesis on the changing nature of cultural pluralism between 1924 and 1965.



TWENTIETH-CENTURY *United States History*



HISTORICAL WRITING ABOUT THE UNITED STATES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HAS MUSHROOMED OVER THE YEARS, REFLECTING GREAT INTEREST AMONG AMERICAN READERS AND STUDENTS IN BOOKS CONCERNED WITH THE RECENT PAST. UNIVERSITY COURSES CONCERNED WITH TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN LIFE ARE FREQUENTLY VERY LARGE AND RELY ON A WEALTH OF SOURCES—NOT ONLY BOOKS AND ARTICLES BUT ALSO PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED ARCHIVAL MATERIALS, FILMS, DOCUMENTARIES, RECORDINGS, STATISTICAL INFORMATION, AND ORAL ACCOUNTS—THAT HAVE ENABLED SCHOLARS TO EXPLORE A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES AND HISTORICAL CONTROVERSIES.



Although it is difficult to generalize about so vast a domain of inquiry, a few tentative observations may be useful at the start. The first is that most historians teaching and researching in this field are comfortable with a scheme of periodization that accepts the years around 1900 as pivotal in various ways: teaching courses on twentieth-century American history makes sense to them (though books and articles dealing with the period since 1975 or so are short in archival sources and lack historical perspective). At the turn of the century, a swelling of immigration, much of it from eastern and southern Europe, dramatically changed the nature of the American population. At the same time, the severe depression of the mid-1890s came to an end, as did populism, a major protest movement. A wave of mergers accelerated the process of corporate concentration. The Republican Party, electorally powerful in the urban-industrial Northeast and Midwest, came to dominate national politics until the 1930s. New patterns of electioneering arose, featuring the weakening over time of political parties, a decline in voter participation, and the proliferation of well-organized interest groups.



A larger administrative state started to assert itself, and the United States began to emerge as a major power on the international scene. Many of the characteristics of modern, mass consumer society—automobiles, motion pictures, radio, advertising and public relations, amusement parks, commercialized sports—also became increasingly central to the culture early in the twentieth century and have sparked great research interest among scholars and students in recent years.

Most historians have accepted the view that the years around World War II were also pivotal in the United States. Many two-semester courses in modern United States history accordingly use 1945 or thereabouts as a dividing point. At that time, trends that had become important in the 1930s—the rise of industrial labor unions and of agribusiness, the triumph of a new, Democratic electoral coalition, major expansion in the size of the federal government and of the international power of the nation—became firmly established. Post-World War II developments, notably the expansion of a powerful civil rights movement and of feminism, and the resurgence once again of immigration and of ethnic



consciousness, also became central to American politics and social life, especially after 1960. Reflecting concerns such as these, studies of race, ethnic, and gender relations have become thriving areas of scholarly specialization for historians concerned with the twentieth century. Indeed, a focus on “race-class-gender” matters has become a central organizing principle for school and university history courses in the United States.



Trends in historiography concerning modern America have also changed considerably in recent years. Historians writing in the relatively calm 1950s often tended to hold two assumptions. The first was that socio-economic conflicts, which had seemed sharp earlier in the century, were abating. The ever more prosperous, native-born, and secular nation, it appeared to many people in these early post-World War II years, was shedding its class, ethnic, and religious contentiousness and developing greater consensus. The second, related assumption was that America, leader of the so-called Free World, was a great, liberty-loving democracy that other nations would do well to emulate. Indeed, some writers argued that United States history had been “exceptional,” in that it featured unmatched freedom, opportunity, and prosperity. America was also exceptional for having avoided much of the bloodshed and brutality that had afflicted Europe and Asia since 1914.

Holding assumptions such as these, many Americans in the 1950s paid relatively little attention to grimmer aspects of contemporary society, notably racial discrimination, poverty, and a range of still festering religious, class, and gender conflicts. A central narrative line of many history textbooks at the time—one that highlighted politics and public policies—tended to celebrate accomplishments of reformers, especially “progressives” early in the century, New Dealers in the 1930s, and (in histories written after 1960) the public programs of President John F. Kennedy’s New Frontier and President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society. Examples of these approaches, written in the late 1950s, include George Mowry, *The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900–1912* (1958), and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt* (1957–1960), three fast-paced volumes that criticize Republican conservatives in the 1920s and praise Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal programs between 1933 and 1936. (Schlesinger later wrote admiringly of John F. Kennedy’s presidency, in *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* [1965].) Texts published in the 1950s and early 1960s also tended to hail the successes of American foreign policies, especially those of the World War II–Cold War era.

Since the early 1950s, however, historical writing about the United States in the twentieth century has looked more critically at such developments. As early as 1955, Richard Hofstadter, one of America’s greatest historians, published *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (1955), a brilliant study of reformers between the 1890s and 1930s. While Hofstadter gave the New Dealers generally good marks, he lamented the tameness of other reformers, and he described many pop-



ulists and progressives as racists, ethno-centrists, anti-Semites, and proponents of conservative, “unprogressive” public policies, such as prohibition and immigration restriction. A few years later, left-leaning historians such as Gabriel Kolko described progressives (in his *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900–1916* [1963]) as apologists for corporate interests.

Still other scholars, sometimes labeled as proponents of an “organizational synthesis” of modern United States history, asked readers to be skeptical about the high-sounding rhetoric of “reformers” and to pay attention instead to the significant political role of self-serving interest groups, ethno-cultural rivalries, and ever larger institutions. In *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (1967), Robert Wiebe offered an early and influential version of this approach by stressing the importance of corporate and governmental bureaucracies in twentieth-century American life. In this scheme of things, the older, largely dualistic histories—those that featured progressive “reformers” doing battle against evil-doers—seemed overly simplistic. To historians like Wiebe, it was no longer clear that there was a “progressive” direction to American development, or that consensus would replace conflict as a central theme of twentieth-century United States life. What mattered most, it was argued, were impersonal processes of centralization and bureaucratization of social and economic organizations.

Historians, of course, are unavoidably influenced by events of their own times. In the 1960s, a turbulent time, many heated domestic issues, notably civil rights, feminism, and environmentalism, sensitized scholars to the persistence of conflict, inequality, and corporate power in American life. National involvement in the seemingly endless Vietnam War prompted highly critical reexaminations—some by sympathizers with the so-called New Left—of American foreign policies. Political scandals, notably the constitutional crisis of Watergate that led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974, led many scholars to ask probing questions about the American political system. Some historians turned away from the study of politics and foreign relations—areas of life featuring “old white men” as primary actors—and explored instead the lives and ideas of ordinary people, especially the poor and oppressed. This was social history “from the bottom up,” a durable trend that after 1970 affected scholarly writing in America of many forms of history. Some scholars emphasized what they perceived as the harmful hegemony of elites; others highlighted the “agency” of hitherto unno-



ticed citizens, who coped imaginatively in order to resist these elites. Though biographies of political figures and narratives of heroic fighting by Americans in World War II continued to appeal to the general reading public, the rise of social history within the discipline marginalized many forms of academic political and diplomatic history and greatly invigorated the scholarly study of previously neglected people.

Other conflicts that intensified in America after 1970 further advanced these historiographical trends, especially the tendency of academic historians to focus on social and cultural history and to take critical stances toward elites. Rising immigration, made possible by immigration reform in 1965, helped to arouse renewed controversies over population growth and multiculturalism. Racial and class tensions, especially amidst accelerating economic inequality after 1973, intensified doubts about the possibility of attaining social consensus or sustaining upward social mobility. Religious differences, notably between liberals and conservative fundamentalists, emerged more openly than at any time since the impassioned debates over Darwinism in the 1920s. The ever greater reach of the consumer culture, driven in part by powerful advertising and public relations interests, and by the spread of television, turned many scholars to a critical reexamination of capitalistic values, and of what they frequently regarded as a gross and hedonistic popular culture.

Many popular historians in these years, downplaying such controversial themes, continued to write about more positive, patriotic matters, often in accounts of heroic American exploits in World War II or by publishing largely uncritical biographies of important figures such as Eleanor and Franklin D. Roosevelt. An example of this genre is *Truman* (1992), an admiring biography of President Harry Truman by David McCullough, a historian whose books have reached millions of readers in recent years. But many scholars, reflecting the social, racial, and political conflicts that beset post-1960 America, built upon the critical stance that Hofstadter and others had adopted earlier. By the 1980s differences between these divergent appraisals of modern United States history had grown, so much so that conservatives (and some others) came to denounce the mainstream of academic history as biased, left-wing propaganda that lacked appreciation for those admirable American qualities—freedom, democracy, opportunity, entrepreneurial and technological imagination—that they said had given the United States an exceptional history.



General/Reference Works

This essay will begin by citing a few general and reference works. It will follow with sections that focus on important epochs, and then on some broad themes covered by writers of twentieth-century United States history.

Many university courses dealing with this period ask students to read a general textbook for background. One is James T. Patterson, *America in the Twentieth Century: A History* (2000). Ellen Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory: Writing America's Past, 1880–1980* (2002), is a well-written evaluation of some major trends in American history writing—many of them noted above. Stanley Kutler, ed., *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Twentieth Century* (1996), is a four-volume set of first-rate scholarly essays, with bibliographies, dealing with a wide range of subjects. Congressional Quarterly, Inc. publishes outstanding reference works concerned with such subjects as Congress, the presidency, elections, and politics. See, for instance, *Guide to the U.S. Supreme Court* (1997), edited by Joan Biskupic and Elder Witt, which provides comprehensive information on cases, justices, and constitutional issues. Stephan Thernstrom, ed., *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (1980), includes informed scholarly essays on a range of subjects related to the history of immigration and ethnic relations. Many more specialized encyclopedias—for instance, concerning African Americans, Native Americans, women, social history, and the Left—can be found in reference rooms of any good university library. An indispensable biographical source is *American National Biography*, a twenty-four volume set of biographical essays, with bibliographies, of Americans from all walks of life who died before 1997. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes are the general editors.

A basic source for statistical information, compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, is *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (1976). The U.S. Census Bureau also publishes the annual *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (2001), which offers data for the years since 1970. Two recent books concentrating on twentieth century trends are Stephen Moore and Julian Simon, *It's Getting Better All the Time: 100 Greatest Trends of the Last 100 Years* (2000); and Theodore Caplow, et al., *The First Measured Century: An Illustrated Guide to Trends in America, 1900–2000* (2001). Both feature clear graphs and charts.



Politics, Economics, and Foreign Affairs (1900–1945)

This and the next section (Politics, Economics, and Foreign Affairs, 1945–2000) feature general surveys and books concerned primarily with politics, economics, and foreign affairs. Needless to say, some of the books cited in these sections deal partly with events that do not exactly fit into these chronological boundaries. Later sections of this essay will (in order) consider race, ethnic, and religious relations; issues concerned with women and gender; and histories of ideas, science, and culture. These three sections will also include many books that cross the boundary of 1945.

Aside from the aforementioned books by Hofstadter, Kolko, and Wiebe, there are many works that cover the years between 1900 and 1933. John M. Cooper, *The Pivotal Decades: The United States, 1900–1920* (1990), interprets progressive reforms, often in ways that differ from those provided in Mowry's book mentioned earlier. Cooper compares the presidencies of two early twentieth-century leaders in his 1983 book *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt*. Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (2001), is a volume in his acclaimed biography of Theodore Roosevelt that deals with TR's presidency. Morton Keller, *Regulating a New Economy* (1990), analyzes efforts to regulate business between 1900 and 1933. William E. Leuchtenburg's *The Perils of Prosperity* (1958) is an excellently written interpretive account of the years between 1914 and 1932. David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (1980), explores domestic developments in America. Maury Klein, *Rainbow's End: The Crash of 1929* (2001), explains the Great Crash in the context of social, economic, and cultural developments earlier in the century.

Four books that focus on political trends, including progressive reforms, during these years are Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865–1928* (1986), which highlights changes in patterns of northern politics; Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (1992), a revisionist account of social policies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890–1935* (1991); and Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920* (1982), which argues that the years between 1877 and 1920 were important in creating the origins of a modern administrative state. Skocpol and Skowronek are sociologists and political scientists whose work is often cited by historians; interdisciplinary



cooperation has been a noticeable trend in recent scholarship concerned with political history and social policy.

Important books concerned with urban, economic, business, and labor history during these years include Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1985), a sweeping study of suburbanization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and Stephan Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880–1970* (1973), a methodologically influential study of social and geographical mobility. Alfred D. Chandler, *Scale and Scope: The Dynamics of Industrial Capitalism* (1990), interprets the rise of managerial capitalism in the United States, Britain, and Germany. Thomas McCraw, *American Business, 1920–2000: How it Worked* (2000), is a concise history of its subject. Labor histories include David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (1987); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (1987) which explores the labor and family life of southern textile workers; Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (1969); Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870–1920* (1983), a social-cultural study of workers in Worcester, Massachusetts; and Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1935–1955* (1995). Two short labor histories are Dubofsky, *Industrialism and the American Worker, 1865–1920* (1975), and Zieger, *American Workers, American Unions, 1920–1985* (1995).

Many historians have written on politics and public programs of the New Deal in the 1930s. William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932–1940* (1963) is an excellent place to start, as is Anthony Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933–40* (1989). David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (1999), is a sweeping narrative history concerned with political, military, and diplomatic issues between 1929 and 1945. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (1990), explores the world of Chicago's workers and ethnic groups, documenting their changing attitudes and their receptivity to federal programs in the 1930s. Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (1982), evaluates the ideas and programs of Louisiana's colorful politician Huey Long and of Father Charles Coughlin, who led significant dissident movements during the Great Depression. Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (1979), is both a cultural history of American atti-



tudes toward the environment and a harsh critique of federal agricultural policies during the Depression years. Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue* (1978), assesses racial programs and progress during the New Deal years. Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (1995), studies the eclipse of reform ideas by more conservative thinking.

An excellent interpretive overview of social, economic, and political issues during World War II is John M. Blum, *Y Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (1976). Michael Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (1994), consists of spirited revisionist chapters on problematic aspects of the war that support his ironic title. John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (1986), is a vivid, disturbing history of fighting between Americans and the Japanese. Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps, North America: Japanese in the United States and Canada during World War II* (1993), documents the incarceration of Japanese-Americans, many of them United States citizens, during the war.

Students of legal history would do well to start with Lawrence Friedman's interpretive survey, *American Law in the Twentieth Century* (2000). Leuchtenburg, *The Supreme Court Reborn: The Constitutional Revolution in the Age of Roosevelt* (1995), features authoritative essays on various court cases, mainly in the 1920s and 1930s.

Readers seeking histories of diplomacy and foreign relations between 1900 and 1945 will find coverage in many of the sources above, especially those by Cooper, Leuchtenburg, and Kennedy. Books offering more focused treatment of these matters include Ernest R. May, *The World War and American Isolation, 1914–1917* (1959), concerning Woodrow Wilson's policies; Robert Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917–1921* (1985); Warren Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations* (2000); and Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945* (1979), an excellent, broad-ranging history.

Politics, Economics, and Foreign Affairs (1945–2000)

Among the many interpretive surveys of aspects of this era are Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (1995), which looks at the legacy of World War II and of the Cold War in American culture; Paul S. Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (1985); David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (1993), which features



chapters on socio-economic and cultural trends in that decade; James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974* (1996); and Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1987), which features the author's personal reminiscences as well as more straightforward history. Elizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (2003), is a wide-ranging, critical analysis of the power of consumerism, not only in economic life but also in the mass media and in politics, mainly since World War II. Two lively surveys of the 1970s are David Frum, *How We Got Here: The '70s, the Decade that Brought You Modern Life (For Better or Worse)* (2000); and Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies*. Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000), laments the decline of community cooperation in American society and culture in the latter decades of the century.

Thanks in part to the rise of presidential power after 1945, and to the proliferation of special presidential libraries (for all presidents from Herbert Hoover forward), studies of American presidents who served during these years have proliferated. Among the best are Alonzo L. Hamby, *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman* (1995), a thoroughly documented biography of the thirty-third president; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (1990), a balanced account; Fred Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (1982), which argues that Eisenhower had strong control of his administration; Herbert S. Parmet, *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (1983), a reliable account of the presidential years; Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times* (1998), the second volume of his authoritative biography of Lyndon Johnson; Ambrose, *Nixon* (1987–1991) (a three volume biography, the second of which covers 1962–1972, and the third the Watergate years); Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (1994), a brief revisionist study that is less hostile to Nixon than most other studies; and Gary M. Fink and Hugh D. Graham, eds., *The Carter Presidency: Policy Choices in the Post-New Deal Era* (1998), a collection of scholarly essays on key issues of the Carter years. Although archival sources for presidents since Carter have only recently been opening, useful books on these leaders also exist. Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (2000), is an admirably crafted study of Reagan's presidency. Parmet, *George Bush: The Life of a Lone Star Yankee* (1997), is balanced and thorough. William Berman, *From the Center to the Edge: The Politics and Policies of the Clinton Presidency* (2001), is a straightforward narrative. Hamby, *Liberalism and Its Challengers: From*



FDR to Bush (1992), offers interpretive essays on presidents from Roosevelt through the first George Bush.

A host of studies have examined McCarthyism and the Red Scare that followed World War II. Three are Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (1998), a large interpretive survey that deals also with the late 1930s and early 1940s; Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (1990), a briefer account; and Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (1991), which has much to say about other cultural developments of the 1940s and 1950s.

Books that deal with politics and public policy during the postwar years include Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930–1980* (1989), a widely read collection of essays on political trends; Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945–1960* (1986); Thomas B. Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (1991), which focuses on the period between the 1960s and the 1980s; and Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (2001), a well-researched study of the rise of conservatism in California politics.

Three provocative books that capture changes in liberal social policies during the 1960s are Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (1984); Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism* (1996), on strategies against poverty; and Steven Gillon, *“That’s Not What We Meant to Do”: Reform and its Unintended Consequences in Twentieth-Century America* (2000). Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (1995), critically assesses the career of Alabama’s George Wallace, the demagogic political leader and presidential candidate who flourished in the 1960s and 1970s. For legal and constitutional developments, which were significant, Bernard Schwartz, *Super Chief, Earl Warren and his Supreme Court: Judicial Biography* (1983), a study of Earl Warren and the Supreme Court in the 1950s and 1960s, is both readable and informative.

Other books that explore public policies in the post-World War II era include Michael Katz, *The Price of Citizenship: Redefining the American Welfare State* (2001); Patterson, *America’s Struggle Against Poverty in the Twentieth Century* (2000), an interpretive overview; Frank Levy, *The New Dollars and Dreams: American Incomes and Economic Change* (1998), which concentrates on economic change and federal economic policies



in the postwar era; Robert M. Collins, *More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America* (2000), a fine study of the impact of economic growth on American culture and socio-economic programs; Herbert Stein, *Presidential Economics: The Making of Economic Policy from Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond* (1994), a leading economist's survey and evaluation of economic policies; Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945–1980* (1983); and Hugh D. Graham, *Collision Course: The Strange Convergence of Affirmative Action and Immigration Policy in America* (2002), which analyzes the connections since the 1970s between immigration policies and affirmation action programs.

Studies of postwar environmental issues have begun to proliferate. Among the best are Samuel P. Hays, in collaboration with Barbara D. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955–1985* (1987), a knowledgeable account of issues and policies; Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (1993), which focuses on environmental issues affecting urban-industrial life; Michael J. Lacey, ed., *Government and Environmental Policies: Essays on Historical Developments since World War Two* (1991); Gregg Easterbrook, *A Moment on the Earth: The Coming Age of Environmental Optimism* (1996), a well-written survey which is less critical of environmental policies than most other works; Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (2002), a critical survey of America's relationship to the environment that devotes considerable space to pre-twentieth-century issues; and Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (1985), a hard-hitting analysis of water policies in the West.

For information concerning the domestic consequences of the Vietnam War, useful sources include Christian Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (1993), which explores the attitudes of American soldiers during and after the war, and highlights the inequities of the military draft; Loren Baritz, *Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did* (1985); and Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (1983), a large general history which looks at social as well as diplomatic and military aspects of the war.

Although the rise of academic social history has left many diplomatic historians feeling marginalized and defensive, scholars have continued to write valuable accounts of America's foreign policies in the postwar years. John L. Gaddis has been especially productive, publishing *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (1972);



Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (1982), which evaluates postwar defense and foreign policies through the 1970s; and *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (1997), which looks back on Soviet-American relations from a post-Cold War perspective. Another critical specialist in the field of Soviet-American relations is Raymond Garthoff: *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (1994), and *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (1994).

A number of books concerning the Cold War, some of them written by “New Left” historians during and after the United States became heavily involved in Vietnam, have sharply criticized American attitudes and foreign policies. One is Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam; The Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation with Soviet Power* (1965), which links Truman’s decisions to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki to America’s anti-Soviet obsessions. Martin Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (1975), also laments the way in which these decisions were reached. Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (1986), comprehensively covers the subject. Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration and the Cold War* (1992), is a broad and often critical study of Truman’s foreign and defense policies; it can profitably be read along with Gaddis’s more positive account noted above. Studies of policies concerning Korea include Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950–1953* (1985), and William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (2002). Michael R. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960–1963* (1991), is a nuanced interpretation of confrontations between these two men. Among the many histories of American policies affecting particular regions of the world is James Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (1988), concerning Iran prior to the late 1980s.

Race, Ethnicity, Religion

No field of historical writing has grown more rapidly in the past twenty-five years than scholarship concerned with race relations. Three broad treatments of the subject are Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (2001), an ambitious interpretation of various aspects of race relations and racial policies; Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom, *America in Black and White: One*



Nation, Indivisible (1997), an interpretive survey that finds considerable improvement in race relations and in the status of African Americans over the course of the century; and Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890–2000* (2001). C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955), is a leading southern historian's interpretation of the complicated rise of racial segregation in the South before the 1950s. Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (1998), is an exhaustive history of black experiences in the South at the turn of the twentieth century. Numan V. Bartley, *The New South, 1945–1980* (1995), offers a thorough treatment of its subject. Mia Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas about White People, 1830–1925* (2000), analyzes popular as well as “scientific” attitudes about race in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (1981), covers the history of the Ku Klux Klan between 1865 and 1965. *Scottsboro: The Tragedy of the American South* (1969), by Dan T. Carter, is a history of the controversial, politicized case that led to extended imprisonment of young black men convicted of raping two white women in Alabama in 1931. A major study of northern race relations is Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996), revealing the wide extent of racial discrimination in Detroit before and after World War II.

Books concerned with aspects of the postwar civil rights movement are especially numerous. A frequently assigned survey is Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954–1992* (1993). Two narrative histories by Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (1988), and *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963–65* (1998), tell about civil rights struggles in the South, emphasizing the role of Martin Luther King, Jr. *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (1980) by William H. Chafe, analyzes civil rights and race relations in Greensboro, especially in the 1960s, while John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (1994), emphasizes the role of unsung black activists in postwar Mississippi. His focus on ordinary citizens represents a tendency of recent scholars of the civil rights movement to highlight people other than heroic leaders like King.

Hugh D. Graham, *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy* (1990), stands as the most comprehensive and reliable book on the evolution of federal civil rights policies between 1960 and the early 1970s. Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class,*



and *Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (1991), recounts the nasty battles over racially mandated school busing in Boston. James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (2001), looks at long-range legacies of the Supreme Court decision of 1954 that struck down state-sponsored racial segregation in the public schools. Like much writing on race relations since 1970, these two books document progress hemmed in by serious setbacks for civil rights.

Ethnic relations, immigration, and conflicts over multiculturalism have also attracted many scholars in recent years. A frequently assigned survey of immigration is John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (1985). His interpretation, like that of many other recent works on the subject, pays special attention to the overseas backgrounds of migrants, and stresses the agency and creative adaptation of newcomers to America. A specialized survey is Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850* (1988), concerning Chinese and Japanese immigration patterns and experiences in the U.S. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (1998) by Matthew F. Jacobson, represents a recent trend in scholarship that sees many white immigrants coming to identify themselves strongly with their “whiteness” as a way of distinguishing themselves from—and rising above—African Americans. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (1955), is the standard history of super-nationalist, anti-immigrant feelings—nativism—that culminated in comprehensive immigration restriction, and exclusion of most Asians, from America by the 1920s. Robert A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924–1952* (1957), traces the subsequent history of restrictive legislation.

Specialized histories of how various ethnic groups have coped with life in the United States, especially in the post-World War II era, include Peter Skerry, *Mexican-Americans: The Ambivalent Minority* (1993); Ronald T. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (1989); and David M. Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* (1985), a survey with much to say about “third world” immigrants in America since World War II. For an understanding of white American attitudes toward Native Americans, from the colonial era into the twentieth century, Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (1978), remains a useful source. Works cited earlier, by Gillon and Graham (*Collision Course*), highlight the unpredictable consequences of the more liberal immigration law passed in 1965.



Scholarly interest in American religion during the twentieth century has also grown in recent years, in part because of the development of more overt tensions since the 1960s between fundamentalists and evangelists on the one hand and more liberal and secular Americans on the other hand. A helpful collection of essays is Michael J. Lacey, ed., *Religion and Twentieth-Century Intellectual Life* (1989). A scholarly study focusing on earlier twentieth-century conflicts is George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870–1925* (1980). Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (1983), explores the ideas of conservative believers, especially in the 1930s and 1940s. Philip Gleason, *Keeping the Faith: American Catholicism Past and Present* (1987), offers sophisticated analysis of Catholic ideas and practices. Among the many books that have studied the revival of conservative religious groups since the 1960s is Sara Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right* (1998).

Women, Gender Relations

A starting place for the modern history of American women is William H. Chafe, *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the Twentieth Century* (1991), a survey of the subject through 1990. Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (1987), chronicles the rise of feminist thought and action early in the century. Allen Davis, *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* (1973), is a sophisticated study of the life and reputation of Jane Addams, a founder of the settlement house movement, peace activist, and prominent progressive reformer. Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (2001), presents an archive-based study of political efforts for gender equality under the law, mainly between the 1930s and 1970s.

Other, more specialized studies include Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (1985); David M. Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (1978); and Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900–1918* (1982). Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (1986), reconstructs the culture of women workers in New York City early in the century. A comparable study is Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890–1925* (1985).



Books that concern the post-World War II era include Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (1988), which links stereotyping of women to pervasive Cold War fears in the culture at large. See also John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970* (1983); and D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (1988). David J. Garrow, *Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade* (1994), is a sweeping legal and intellectual history of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion in the United States.

Ideas, Science, Culture

General surveys of intellectual life include two books by Richard H. Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (1973), and *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age: American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s* (1985). Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (1998), chronicles and evaluates social thinking in western Europe and the United States from the late nineteenth century to 1935.

Other important books in the field of intellectual history are Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (1991), a biography of one of the nation's most celebrated twentieth-century philosophers; Lawrence Cremin, *Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876–1957* (1964), a sweeping interpretation of trends in educational thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (1997), a wide-ranging study of ideological and religious battles over Darwinian evolution before and after the sensational Scopes trial in Tennessee in 1925.

Scholars concentrating on the history of science and medicine have tended to occupy positions on the fringes of academic history writing. But they have done imaginative work, and many American universities offer courses in these areas. Among the books in these fields are Allan Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880* (1985); James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment* (1981), a riveting book on federally-supported, racist experiments concerning syphilis among black American men in mid-century; and John C. Burnham, *How Superstition Won and Science Lost: Popularizing Science and Health in the United States* (1987). See also James T. Patterson, *The Dread Disease: Cancer and Modern American Cul-*



ture (1987), a cultural history of cancer in America, 1880s–1980s; and Elizabeth Fee and Daniel M. Fox, eds., *AIDS: The Making of a Chronic Disease* (1992), a medical and cultural study.

Reflecting the omnipresence of television and movies in recent years, historians and others, many of them trained in American Studies, have succeeded in making the study of popular culture one of the most thriving fields of scholarship. Key sources for students interested in appreciating fundamental assumptions of scholars working in this area include Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (1984), which consists of ground-breaking essays outlining paradigms for the history of cultural change, mainly between 1900 and 1940. Two further collections of essays on aspects of this culture are Richard W. Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880–1980* (1983), and Fox and Lears, eds., *The Power of Culture: Critical Essays in American History* (1993). Lears has also written a history of advertising in modern American life, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (1994). William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (1993), brings to life developments in the culture of consumption as reflected in department store displays and advertisements early in the twentieth century. John H. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (1978), includes photographs and paintings to illuminate interpretations concerning the meaning of amusement parks, notably Coney Island, New York, for early twentieth-century Americans.

Thomas Hine, *Populuxe* (1986), presents a beautifully illustrated cultural history, especially of home design and furnishings, during the upbeat 1940s and 1950s. James L. Baughman provides a short survey in *The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941* (1992). For the appeal of mass spectator sports, see Richard O. Davies, *America's Obsession: Sports and Society since 1945* (1994). [Two of the many studies of film include Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Social History of American Movies* (1975), which is excellent at linking trends in Hollywood productions, mainly in the pre-World War II era, to larger cultural concerns.] See also Robert B. Toplin, *Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood* (2002), concerning the use of history in film.

Most of the books mentioned above are relatively broad in scope; space does not permit citation here of the very large number of more specialized monographs, many of them of high scholarly quality, that



trained historians in the past few decades have published about twentieth-century United States history. Scholarly journals, notably the *American Historical Review* and the *Journal of American History*, offer more detailed articles as well as brief reviews of most of these works. The latter journal also features sections that note the contributions of non-American scholars to the study of United States history. *Reviews in American History*, a valuable resource, is a journal devoted entirely to longer reviews.

A host of more specialized journals—concerned, for instance, with social, environmental, economic, women’s, political, diplomatic, ethnic, racial, religious, medical, and regional history—reveal that many American scholars and teachers have tended, especially in the past few decades, to concentrate their interests in one or more sub-fields of twentieth-century United States history. Although specialization of this sort has led to charges that the writing and teaching of United States history is becoming balkanized, it is a trend that has led scholars to study hitherto neglected subjects, and it seems likely to endure. Moreover, as archival sources open, and historical perspective expands, we may anticipate solid studies of the past twenty-five or so years. In all, there is every reason to expect that scholarly and popular interest in twentieth-century United States history will continue at a high level, and that many of the numerous historians now in training will add creatively to the shelves of scholarly works concerning the subject. 



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